

Norms and Values

Lesson No.	Title	Activity
8	Norms and Values	Tabulate all the different kinds of norms and values practiced in India.

Summary

Norms are the guidelines, which direct conduct in particular situation. Value is concerned with what is good and desirable, which is indispensable for the survival of society. Variety of norms can be seen as an expression of a single value. An ordered and stable society is not possible without shared norms and values.

Concept of Norm

- Guidelines which direct our behaviour, conduct or action are called norms.
- Norms are also **Group-shared expectations**. In this sense Norms are **unwritten laws**
- Norms are the shared rules or guidelines that govern our actions in society. They bring cohesion to society.

Types of Norm

- **Personal Norms Vs. Social Norms:** Personal Norms are purely individual in character whereas Social Norms are widely accepted and impersonal in nature. They are developed by group of people.
- **Communal Norms Vs. Associational Norms:** Often norms are outward expressions of a society's deeply held and shared values – *communal norms*, for instance greeting someone in India with a 'Namaste'. They can also apply to a particular group like the custom of wearing a sacred thread among the upper caste Hindus- *associational norms*.
- **Formal Norms Vs. Informal Norms:** Norms can be laws in which case they are *formal norms*, but they also can be procedures, morals, and customs or expectations- *informal norms*.

Concepts associated with Norms All norms can be subsumed under three concepts.

Folkways: Folkways are norms that ordinary people follow in everyday life. Conformity is expected, but not absolutely insisted on. They represent group standards. Folkways are not strictly enforced. Examples: ideas about appropriate dress and greetings.

Mores: Mores are norms that are taken more seriously and are strictly enforced. Mores can be positive i.e. 'the do's' or negative i.e. 'the don'ts' or 'the taboos'.

Customs: Customs are socially accepted patterns of behaviour in which people do things together in personal contacts. Example: touching the feet of elders in India and not in the West.

Normlessness

- The normative system gives society an internal cohesion, without which social life is not possible.
- For example in office we follow certain rules which give guidelines and help to complete office work.
- Normlessness is a sense of detachment from existing social norms or rules. It

Values

- Each culture has a general consensus of what is desirable, correct and good that most members of society share. They guide most of our actions. Values are long range commitments to ends that people share culturally. Essentially, values describe our "moral" goals in society.
- Values can be traditional and modern. For example traditionally Indian society was organised on the hierarchical principles of the caste system. However, in modern day India all citizens are equal. An attempt to follow the traditional principles of the caste system in India today will lead to **value conflict**

Value Conflict

- Since values evolve through ages and have an important role in the society.
- With the change of the society and influence of one society upon the other, value systems also keep on changing.
- There is a possibility of conflict among traditional and modern values.
- Hierarchy, holism and democracy

Kind of Values:

- Moral Values- values related to religion and different situations of the society. Moral values usually provide normative direction to the moral behavior of the individual.
- Rational Values- Scientific and logical in nature. Hardworking is a rational value of the modern society
- Dominant Values- Values which has strong impact in the mind of a person and violation of such values is not possible
- Variant Values- Values in which person has freedom to behave according to his desires and choices.

Evaluate Yourself

1. Illustrate the difference between personal norm and social norm with support of examples.
2. Comment on the relevance of values in the contemporary society.
3. Clarify how synthesis between traditional and modern values can be